DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 263 824 HE 018 868

AUTHOR Cox, Eleanor
TITLE Spelman College Is Tying It All Togother through the Living-Learning Program.
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (Portland, OR, March 31-April 3, 1985).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Affective Objectives; Cognitive Objectives; Dormitories; Extracurricular Activities; Group Experience; Higher Education; Individual Development; Integrated Activities; Intellectual Development; Interdisciplinary Approach; Liberal Arts; *Living Learning Centers; On Campus Students; *Student Development
IDENTIFIERS *Spelman College GA

ABSTRACT

Spelman College's Living Learning Program is described. The program was developed to integrate classroom cognitive development with affective development acquired through formal and informal learning experiences offered by the student life division. Program activities are designed to expose students to a broad range of ideas through interaction with peers, faculty, and other role models. It also provides opportunities for students to acquaint themselves with the many problems of the real world and to utilize their liberal education as "avenues" of flexibility in the problem solving process. Specific objectives include: integrating classroom learning with residential education through small group sessions in dormitories, and offering panel discussions, seminars, debates, films, mini-concerts, and local field trips. Affective developmental modules or stages for the undergraduate years involve: activities to promote freshmen awareness of the liberal arts; exploration through elective courses and issue-oriented residential programs during the sophomore year; selection by juniors of program themes that complement or parallel the major; and integrating the humanities and social sciences during the senior year. Information is also provided on convocation, program staff, admission to the program, and recognition/awards. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED263824

SPELMAN COLLEGE IS TYING IT ALL TOGETHER THROUGH THE LIVING-LEARNING PROGRAM.

Eleanor Cox

The President's Commission on Education, which produced their findings in a report entitled "A Nation at Risk" stated that the American System of education from kindergarten through high school is in desperate straits. Because of this deplorable situation, more and more institutions are receiving an increased number of students poorly prepared to pursue higher education.

To further exacerbate this situation, students have no clear comprehension as to the benefits of a college education beyond the potential for increased earnings. It is not understood that an undergraduate education, especially one that is based on the liberal arts, does not train one for a specific job, rather to develop analytical skills and critical thought. The real purpose of liberal education is to free students from parochial ideas caused by late adolescence, a state in which most students find themselves. Liberal education should facilitate the liberation of the mind through introduction to new and more profound knowledge about cultural, social and physical worlds. In the process, this knowledge should also enhance and illuminate the student's private world. Educational encounters through a liberal arts program should provide knowledge that can lead to a personal transformation from a narrowly focused insecure person with conflicting attitudes, beliefs and opinions to a more mature and responsive individual.

American higher education has been successful in introducing students to new and profound technological knowledge as it pertains to the physical world. For example, students have learned to use a needle and piece of wax

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Eleanor M. Cox

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE

to preserve sound for centuries; surgeons have been trained to use a scalpel between heartbeats in order to repair a damaged heart; we have developed a picture tube and blended it with sound waves so that the end result is television; we have developed a rocket and gauged the necessary thrust in order to place a man on the moon! Yet we have failed to integrate learning experiences provided by exposure to the humanities and social sciences with those of the physical sciences. Such integrated experiences are necessary to prepare students to meet life on its own terms. For they must be generalists first in order to be successful specialists! Simply speaking, we must as educators, meet society's demand for students trained with general and broad knowledge, combined with a capacity for intellectual activity in our endeavors to educate the "whole" person.

Institutions of higher education have taken innovative measures in designing curricula to increase "open-mindedness", heighten interest and involvement in public issues as well as to increase sensitivity levels to the aesthetics. The basic thrust of this concept is to provide a qualitative education by blending classroom learning with experiences of the "wider world" beyond academe so that students will become cognizant of the relationship of one to the other. It provides evidence that a dedicated group of faculty recognize the necessity for creating a more conducive environment in which learning can take place.

If we are to continue to provide a qualitative educational experience, institutions must go one step further. Not only must the classroom be used

as learning sites, but the Chapel and residential facilities as well. Therefore, the Student Life/Affairs Division must literally become "married" to the Academic Division. Mind you not engaged, because an "engagement" signifies intention! A marriage clearly indicates that a union exists and the parties will work together for their common goals! There are too few marriages. . . . explicit, real and working programs leading to goal attainment!

In the redesigning process, the thought must remain primary that learning depends on how and to what extent the students integrates a body of knowledge imparted by the faculty, secondly, we must remember that transmission of knowledge can and really does occur outside the classroom.

Early in the 20th Century, as Woodrow Wilson attempted to change campus life at Princeton, he stated:

> The real intellectual life of a body of undergraduates, if there be any, manifests itself not in the classroom, but in what they do and talk of and set before themselves as their favorite objects between classes and lectures".

Webster defines "innovation" as something newly introduced, new methods, new custom, device, a change in the way of doing things. For this paper the newness will stem from a rearrangement of an accepted educational process in a way that reaps novel benefits. For instance: The Cluster College, which originated at UCLA - Santa Cruz, concept provided a mechanism for a large university or multiversity to decentralize and

specialize operations. This was done by creating a number of undergraduate sub-colleges, each featuring a close community and warmer student faculty relations which resulted in more personalized instructions. The small liberal arts college, all too often troubled by scarce resources, saw this concept as offering an opportunity for several colleges to combine their intellectual, economic and cultural resources, while still maintaining autonomy. Examples of combinations include the Atlanta University Center, the Claremont Consortium and the Five College System: Smith, Mt. Holyoke, Amherst, Hampshire and the University of Massachusetts.

Spin-offs of the Cluster College concept were Living-Learning Centers and Inner Colleges/Satellite Colleges. The commonalities of these innovative entities were their small size which created a close community and fostered closer student-faculty relations. The Inner/Satellite Colleges and Living-Learning Centers were characterized by residentially based education, which was not a characteristic of the Cluster College. These Centers often developed programs that permitted non-academics of the wider world to share their expertise with faculty and students, as well as provided on-site non-academic counseling, opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and other activities attendant to affective maturation. Thus, the Living-Learning Centers and their activities represented a consummated "marriage" of the Student Life/Affairs and Academic Divisions.

Based on the Michigan State University and UCLA - Santa Cruz Living-Learning concepts, Spelman College has developed a "hybrid"

program. I call it "hybrid" because our current physical facilities and process of granting academic credit do not permit a carbon-copy of the aforementioned systems. Let me give you an overview of the Spelman Living-Learning Program.

Program Philosophy:

In order to integrate the cognitive development offered in the classroom with affective development which is acquired through formal and informal learning experiences offered by the Student Life Division, we have developed the Living-Learning Program. Program activities are designed to expose Spelman students to a broad range of ideas through interaction with peers, faculty and other role models of the large society. It also provides opportunities for students to acquaint themselves with the many problems of the real world and to utilize their liberal education as "avenues" of flexibility in the problem solving process.

Program Goals:

1. To integrate classroom learning with residential education.
2. To increase self-motivation to acquire learning for its rich intellectual benefits rather than for grades.
3. To provide a forum which will foster better thought formulation and articulation.
4. To create an environment outside the classroom for increased interaction between faculty, students and role models of the wider society as they seek to promote cultural and intellectual sharing.

5. To develop leadership skills.

Program Objectives:

1. Small group sessions within residential facilities.
2. Panel discussions, seminars, debates, films, mini-concerts and local field trips.

Program Structure:

A. Residential Component

The "marriage" between the Student Affairs and Academic Divisions was consummated with the integration of the Student Affairs developed "Phase Four" Program using the four undergraduate years as affective developmental modules or stages:

Freshmen year - Awareness

Sophomore year - Exploration

Junior year - Formation

Senior year - Integration

Living-Learning Program activities are designed for cognitive development during the four modules.

Freshmen year - "Awareness" - Theme "Liberal Arts Education: A Bridge for Transition". The purpose of this program is to provide students with an understanding of a liberal arts education and the many alternatives it provides. The General Education/Core Curriculum which is required of all students, provides a base for interdisciplinary designed activities that offer a broad perspective on the many issues

addressed. All freshmen residences offer this theme.

Upperclass

Sophomore Year - "Exploration" - students complete the General Education/Core Curriculum during this year and begin to "explore" through electives. Programs offered in residential facilities reflect the exploration process through interdisciplinary designed activities which are issue-oriented. Ex: "High Technology and the Role of Women," "Balancing the Scales: Money, Land and Politics"; Bach, Baldwin and the Blues"; "Body, Mind and Soul: Self-actualization and the Laws of Nature".

Junior Year - "Formation" - Majors have been selected thus, students may select program themes that complement or parallel the major e.g., "The History of Black Contributions to America" and "International Studies". These program activities provide intellectual depth as well as cultural enrichment.

Senior Year - "Integration" - It is difficult, if not impossible for any course of study to include a liberal arts education, professional preparation and a clinical experience in the span of four (4) years. Therefore, in order to meet the needs of students who have heavily concentrated in a major i.e. Pre-Med/Health Careers, we offer a theme "Liberal Arts and the Life Sciences Program. The activities are designed to provide opportunities for students to interact with role models, students and faculty in the humanities and social sciences in

order to become more knowledgeable as to how these disciplines have a direct effect on the mental and physical well-being of mankind.

B. Convocation Component

A series of faculty coordinated Living-Learning campus-wide convocations are offered with a general theme: "Beyond 1984: The Day After". Addressed are national, international, social, economic and political issues of major importance to the future of our society. Faculty, students and role models with national reputation, e.g., Former Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm; Rosa Parks, Civil Rights Activist; Attorney Patricia Russell; Dr. Betty Siegel, President of Kennesaw College; Mattiwilda Dobbs, Concert Artist; Sculptress Elizabeth Catlett; Atlanta Mayor, Andrew Young; Mrs. C. Delores Tucker former Secretary of the National Democratic Party and Fulton County Commissioner Michael Lomax, etc. have been featured. Subsequent to all Living-Learning sponsored convocations, scheduled follow-up small group discussions, led by Faculty, Junior Faculty Fellows and Resident Directors, are held in all residential facilities.

Staff:

The Program Staff includes:

Full time Associate Dean - Responsible for program design and aids in its implementation.

Faculty Mentors - Provides continuing academic presence in the residences; assists the Associate Dean in the Program design stage and

oversees Program implementation; present programs; serve as mentors.

Resident Directors - Assists the Associate Dean as requested; aids the Faculty Mentors in Program implementation; serves as in-house representative for Student Affairs Division, therefore is responsible for residential non-academic Programs.

Senior Resident Assistant - Assists the Resident Director as requested.

Resident Assistant - Maybe responsible for small group discussion subsequent to major residential or convocation activities; print posters for program events, distribute program-related mail to students and other duties as assigned by the Resident Director.

Living-Learning Program Planning Committee

Committee consists of Faculty Mentors, and other appointed faculty, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean, Associate Dean for Residential Life, Resident Director and Student Representatives. Duties: to aid the Associate Dean in Program Planning and to act as representatives for the two major divisions of the College. Beginning with the 1986-87 Academic year, this committee will bear total responsibility for program continuation.

Program Membership

Membership in the Living-Learning Program is by application only which is structured by the Living-Learning Planning Committee. Each completed application is reviewed by the committee for acceptance or rejection. For the initial year's program, a minimum 2.0 GPA was required. Beginning with

the 1985-86 academic year, no specific grade point average was required. Program admission is now based on a point scale:

1. Essay (creativity)
2. Recommendations
3. History of extra-curricular involvement
4. Reason for requesting program admission

All matriculating students, including commuters and transfers are eligible to apply for program membership.

Recognition/Awards

In the College's effort to foster increased academic motivation and provide recognition for achievers, members who fulfill minimum requirements by attending 80% of activities, per semester, receive a Certificate of Recognition.

Program members, who excel in scholarly growth and leadership development, will compete for several $1000 awards to be used toward the support of a summer or academic year of study abroad. Senior award recipients may opt to have the award applied to graduate/professional school tuition rather than study abroad. Recipients are selected by the Living-Learning Planning Committee. General criteria for selection include demonstration of scholarly growth through the presentation of a quality theme-related research paper in the classroom or to the Program membership; panel memberships and continuous interaction with presenters in Program-Sponsored convocations and residential activities. Leadership development may be demonstrated by chairing and

serving on Program-related committees.

0186D